



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 525
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012-3873
PHONE: (213) 974-8301 FAX: (213) 626-5427

WENDY L. WATANABE
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

MARIA M. OMS
CHIEF DEPUTY

ASST. AUDITOR-CONTROLLERS

ROBERT A. DAVIS
JOHN NAIMO

April 14, 2009

TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe
Auditor-Controller

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Wendy L. Watanabe", is written over the printed name and title.

SUBJECT: **TEENS HAPPY HOMES, INC. CONTRACT REVIEW - A DEPARTMENT
OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
SERVICE PROVIDER**

We have completed a contract compliance review of Teens Happy Homes, Inc. (Teens or Agency), a Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Foster Family Agency service provider.

Background

DCFS contracts with Teens, a private non-profit community-based organization to recruit, train and certify foster care parents for the supervision of children DCFS places in foster care. Once the Agency places a child, it is required to monitor the placement until the child is discharged from the program.

Teens is required to hire qualified social workers to provide case management and act as a liaison between DCFS and foster parents. The Agency oversees a total of 41 certified foster homes in which 91 DCFS children were placed at the time of our review. Teens is located in the First District.

DCFS pays Teens a negotiated monthly rate, per child placement, established by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Foster Care Rates Bureau. Based on

Help Conserve Paper – Print Double-Sided

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

the child's age, Teens receives between \$1,589 and \$1,865 per month, per child. Out of these funds, the Agency pays the foster parents between \$624 and \$790 per month, per child. DCFS paid Teens approximately \$1.6 million during Fiscal Year 2007-08.

Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of the review was to determine whether Teens was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and the County contract. We reviewed certified foster parent files, children's case files, personnel files and interviewed the Agency's staff. We also visited a number of certified foster homes and interviewed several children and foster parents.

Results of Review

The foster parents stated that the services they received from Teens generally met their expectations, and the children stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents. In addition, the Agency social workers' caseloads did not exceed the maximum established by CDSS Title 22 regulations. However, Teens did not always comply with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. Specifically:

- Two of the six homes visited did not conduct disaster drills with the children at the time of placement and every six months thereafter.
- One of the 13 children did not have sufficient clothing. The youth was transferred to her current foster home on February 22, 2008, and as of May 12, 2008, the Agency had not transferred her clothing to her new foster home. Prior to the conclusion of our review, the Agency transferred the child's clothing to her new foster home.
- One of the six homes visited did not adequately secure cleaning solutions.
- One of the six foster parent certification files reviewed did not contain documentation of current driver's license, automobile insurance and CPR/First Aid certifications. Prior to conclusion of our review, Teens provided the required documentation.
- Five of the 13 Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) reviewed were not approved by the children's DCFS social worker as required.
- Ten of the 13 NSPs reviewed did not contain goals that were specific, measurable and attainable and did not indicate the reason the child was in placement.
- Three Quarterly Reports did not contain an Emancipation Preparation Contract as required for children 14 years of age or older. At the time of our review, eight children were 14 years of age or older.

- One personnel file did not contain documentation that the Agency obtained the result of a criminal clearance for one of their social workers. Subsequent to our review, the Agency provided the required documentation.

The details of our review along with recommendations for corrective action are attached.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with Teens on February 12, 2009. In their attached response, Teens indicates agreement with our findings and the actions they have taken to implement the recommendations. We also notified DCFS of the results of our review.

We thank Teens for their cooperation and assistance during this review. Please call me if you have any questions or your staff may contact Don Chadwick at (213) 253-0301.

WLW:MMO:DC:AA

Attachment

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Ted Myers, Chief Deputy Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Susan Kerr, Senior Deputy Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Maurice Mitchell Chairman, Board of Directors, Teens Happy Homes, Inc.
Tina Robinson, Executive Director, Teens Happy Homes, Inc.
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
TEENS HAPPY HOMES, INC.
FISCAL YEAR 2007-2008**

BILLED SERVICES

Objective

Determine whether Teens Happy Homes, Inc. (Teens or Agency) provided program services in accordance with their County contract and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Title 22 regulations.

Verification

We visited six of the 41 Los Angeles County certified foster homes that Teens billed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in January and February 2008, and interviewed six foster parents, 11 of the 13 children and observed one toddler placed in the six homes. We also reviewed the case files for seven foster parents and 13 children. In addition, we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity.

Results

The foster parents stated that the services they received from the Agency generally met their expectations and the children stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents.

Teens needs to ensure that foster homes are in compliance with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. Teens also needs to ensure that Needs and Services Plans (NSPs), Quarterly Reports and foster parent certification files contain all the required information. We specifically noted the following:

Foster Home Visitation and Foster Parent Certification

- One (17%) of the six homes visited did not adequately secure cleaning solutions.
- Two (33%) of the six homes visited did not conduct disaster drills with children at the time of new placement and every six months thereafter.
- One (8%) of the 13 children did not have sufficient clothing. The child was transferred to her current foster home on February 22, 2008, and as of May 12, 2008, the Agency had not transferred her clothing to her new home. Prior to the conclusion of our review, the Agency transferred the child's clothing to her new foster home.
- One (17%) of the six foster parent certification files reviewed did not contain documentation of current driver's license, automobile insurance and CPR/First Aid

certifications. Prior to conclusion of our review, Teens provided the required documentation.

Needs and Services Plans/Quarterly Reports

- Five (38%) of the 13 NSPs reviewed were not approved by the children's DCFS social worker as required.
- Ten (77%) of the 13 NSPs reviewed did not contain goals that were specific, measurable and attainable and did not indicate the reason the child was in placement.

Our prior review also noted that Teens did not always ensure that DCFS social workers approved NSPs and NSPs contained all the required information.

- Three Quarterly Reports did not contain an Emancipation Preparation Contracts and Transitional Living Plans as required for children 14 years of age or older. At the time of our review, eight children were 14 years of age or older.

Recommendations

Teens management ensure:

1. **Staff adequately monitor foster homes to ensure they comply with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.**
2. **Foster parents adequately secure cleaning solutions and other items that could pose a potential safety hazard to children.**
3. **Foster parent conduct and document disaster drills with children upon placement and every six months thereafter.**
4. **Children have the required amount of clothing and that children's clothing accompany the children to their next placement.**
5. **NSPs contain all the required information including goals that are specific, measurable and attainable and indicate the reason the child is in placement.**
6. **NSPs are approved by the children's DCFS social worker.**
7. **Quarterly Reports for the children who are 14 years or older include the Emancipation Preparation Contracts and the Transitional Independent Living Plans.**

8. Foster parent certification files contain all the required information including documentation of current driver's license, automobile insurances and CPR/First Aid certificates.

CLIENT VERIFICATION

Objective

Determine whether the program participants received the services that Teens billed to DCFS.

Verification

We interviewed 13 children placed in six Teens certified foster homes and seven foster parents to confirm the services the Agency billed to DCFS. We also observed one toddler in one of the six homes.

Results

The toddler that we observed seemed well cared for and happy. The foster children interviewed stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents and the foster parents interviewed stated that the services they received from the Agency generally met their expectations.

Recommendation

None.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS

Objective

Determine whether Teens social workers' caseloads do not exceed 15 placements and whether the supervising social worker does not supervise more than six social workers, as required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Verification

We interviewed Teens administrator and supervising social worker and reviewed caseload statistics and payroll records for the Agency's social workers and supervising social worker.

Results

Teens ten social workers carried an average caseload of 15 cases and the Agency's supervising social worker supervised an average of five social workers.

Recommendation

None.

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS**Objective**

Determine whether Teens staff possesses the education and work experience qualifications required by their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, determine whether the Agency conducted hiring clearances prior to hiring their staff and provided ongoing training to staff.

Verification

We interviewed Teens administrator and reviewed each staff's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances and ongoing training.

Results

Teens supervising social worker and social workers possessed the education and work experience required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. Teens also provided ongoing training for staff working on the County contract. However, one personnel file did not contain documentation that the Agency obtained the result of a criminal clearance for one of their social workers. Subsequent to our review, the Agency provided the required documentation.

Recommendation

9. Teens management ensure that criminal clearances for all staff working on the County contract are maintained.

PRIOR YEAR FOLLOW-UP**Objective**

Determine the status of the Auditor-Controller's recommendations from the prior monitoring review.

Verification

We verified whether the outstanding recommendations from the Fiscal Year 2006-07 monitoring review were implemented. The report was issued on January 9, 2007.

Results

The prior monitoring report contained four outstanding recommendations. As indicated earlier, findings related to recommendations 5 and 6 in this report were also noted in the prior monitoring review.

Recommendation

10. Teens management implement the two outstanding recommendations from the Fiscal Year 2005-06 monitoring report.



TEENS HAPPY HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY

February 16, 2009

To: Supervisor, Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor, Gloria Molina
Supervisor, Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor, Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor, Michael D. Antonovich

From: Niki F. Milani, FFA Administrator

RE: **Teens Happy Home Inc., Foster Family Agency**
Response to Contract Review Audit dated December 15, 2008

Dear Supervisors:

Teens Happy Homes Foster Family Agency would like to thank the auditor controller's office, especially Maricela Morfin, for their professional and responsive approach during their audit of our foster family agency's contract review. Teens Happy Homes strives to continually meet the needs of the children and families we serve and looks forward to any recommendation which would help us reach this goal.

The following outlines the Corrective Action Plan and response to address each recommendation made by the auditor:

Recommendation #1: Staff adequately monitor foster homes to ensure they comply with the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Recommendation #2: Foster parents adequately secure cleaning solutions and other items that could pose a potential safety hazard to children.

THH Response to Recommendations #1 and #2: Since AC's audit of THH, our Director of Quality Assurance, the administrator and the supervisors have visited all the homes to ensure that each home is in compliance with Title 22 regulations, including but not limited to ensuring that all cleaning solutions and other poisonous items are inaccessible to the children. In addition, THH will continue to conduct its quarterly home check. Lastly, all social workers have been instructed to monitor their homes for compliance with Title XXII during their home visits.

Recommendation #3: Foster parent conduct and document disaster drills with children upon placement and every six months thereafter.

THH's Response to Recommendation #3: The children who were visited by the auditor controller had arrived at the home after the agency's bi-annual fire drill.

As a result of this audit, a new Case Activity form was created (Initial Case Activity Log) where the social worker will supervise a Fire/Emergency Drill with every newly placed child. The agency will continue to conduct bi-annual Fire/Emergency Drill to ensure ongoing compliance.

TEENS HAPPY HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY

Recommendation #4: Child has the amount of clothing listed within the timeframes stated in the DCFS Clothing Standard and that the child's clothing accompanies the child to next placement.

THH's Response to Recommendation #4: There were unusual circumstances with the transfer of the minor's clothing from one foster home to another. Our foster parent was in the process of relocating to another home when the aforementioned minor AWOLed. Since the CSW wanted minor to remain with the foster parent after minor returned, foster parent packed up minor's belonging and took it with her. Upon her return, minor requested to be placed at another home. Thus, the agency with the CSW's consent placed her in a home in Rialto. THH had a difficult time obtaining minor's clothing from the previous foster mother who had moved to Moreno Valley as the parent was unpacking all the boxes.

In order to ensure that clothing is transferred between homes on a timely manner, all social workers have been retrained on the Department's as well as Teen's policy on clothing requirements. Furthermore, foster parents will be provided with training on clothing expectation, including but not limited to the minimum required clothing and procedures.

Recommendation #5: NSPs contain all the required information including goals that are specific, measurable and attainable and indicate the reason the child is in placement.

THH Response to Recommendation #5: THH has begun to use the new Needs and Services Plan formulated by Department of Children and Family Services. There had been some confusion regarding the form. THH conducted a training with all social workers and supervisors by our liaison from the Quality Assurance Department of DCFS. In addition, our supervisors were sent to another training with DCFS to better understand the NSP form and to ensure that all reports contain the essential information regarding goals and reason for placement.

Recommendation #6: NSPs are approved by the children's DCFS social worker.

THH Response to Recommendation #6: As required by Department of Children and Family Services, THH will make at least three attempts to have the Needs and Services Plan approved by the CSW. Upon approval by the Agency social worker's supervisor, a copy of the report will be mailed to CSW. Also, THH will make a phone call to the CSW to notify him/her that an additional copy will be faxed to the CSW. THH will attempt to obtain the signature/approval, if one has not already been received in a week, by calling and faxing a copy to the CSW. Since the audit, THH has put the following procedure in effect and it has been successful. We are still having difficulty in contacting a few of the CSWs.

Recommendation #7: Quarterly Reports for the children who are 14 years or older include the Emancipation Preparation Contracts and the Transitional Independent Living Plans.

THH Response to Recommendation #7: All social workers have been trained on completing the ILP/Emancipation contract since the audit. Furthermore, all social workers have been instructed/trained in incorporating the contract into their NSP reports. The social worker supervisors have also been trained in monitoring and auditing the social worker's file in order to assure that all pertinent information about Emancipation/ILP is incorporated into the NSP reports.

TEENS HAPPY HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY

Recommendation #8: Foster parent certification files contain all the required information including documentation of current driver's license, automobile insurances and CPR/First Aid certificates.

THH's Response: Since the ACs audit, THH has hired a personnel who will be monitoring the foster parents' files to ensure all documentations are in the files.

Recommendation #9: Teens management ensures that criminal clearances for all staff working on the County contract are maintained on file.

THH's Response: Following Community Care Licensing procedure, the administrator called CCL to ensure that the staff in question was cleared in all three indexes (Criminal, Child Abuse, and FBI) in their database and that the clearances were active before hiring the staff. In compliance with Community Care Licensing, Title 22 Regulations Section 80019 (e) (2), a request for transfer of all three clearances was submitted to CCL before the hiring of the aforementioned staff. CCL states that after the request has been mailed to their office, the agency is allowed to have the individual begin work while waiting for CCL to associate the individual to the agency's license. However, a response was not received from CCL.

In order to comply with AC's recommendation, THH will ensure that a paper copy of staff's clearances is received before the individual begins work.

Recommendation #10: Teen management implements the two outstanding recommendations from the Fiscal Year 2005-2006 monitoring report.

THH's Response: Since the creation of the new Needs and Services Plan/Quarterly Report format by the Department and Children and Family Services, some of the social workers had a difficult time completing their reports. With the trainings provided to social workers and social worker supervisors, all social workers and their supervisors have an understanding on what is expected from them in these reports. Additionally, we have been successful in obtaining signatures/approval of the CSW on the quarterly/NSP with the implementation of aforementioned procedures.

We would like to thank the auditor controller's office, especially Ms. Maricela Morfin, for the evaluation and recommendations made. Your recommendations have provided us with the opportunity to improve our services to our families and children. We look forward to working with you again.

Sincerely,



Niki F. Milani, Ph.D.
FFA Administrator

Cc: Beautina Robinson, CEO
Board of Directors, Teens Happy Homes FFA
Anthony McDaniel, DCFS Out-of-Care Liaison